

45 Organizations Stand Behind Russian NGO Ecodefense

Berlin/Kaliningrad, June 28, 2019 One week after the managing director of the Russian NGO Ecodefense applied for political asylum in Germany, 45 NGOs worldwide declare their solidarity with the environmental organisation, including urgewald, Bürgerinitiative Umweltschutz Lüchow-Dannenberg, Greenpeace, WWF Germany, 350.org and Friends of the Earth USA.

The declaration states: *"Declaring Ecodefense a foreign agent as well as the criminal charges against the organization are clearly driven by political motives. In solidarity with Ecodefense, we demand all charges against Alexandra Koroleva and her organization to be dropped immediately. We will actively spread information on the political repression of Ecodefense, to make sure their case stays in the public realm. We are collecting donations for Ecodefense to pay their – wrongfully imposed - fines, as this could help to ease their current situation."*

Ecodefense is one of the oldest environmental organizations in Russia. Since its foundation in Kaliningrad in 1989, it has successfully fought against Russian nuclear and coal projects. In 2014, the Russian government officially labeled Ecodefense a "Foreign Agent" because the organization had persuaded investors from Europe not to invest in a nuclear power plant near Kaliningrad, which ended construction of the plant in 2013. In recent months, Ecodefense and partners have prevented a new coal mine in the Kuzbass region of Siberia for the first time.

The Russian Ministry of Justice initiated 28 proceedings against Ecodefense for non-compliance with the law, resulting in fines of EUR 30,000, which Ecodefense has not paid. In May 2019, the situation worsened even further: Russian authorities initiated 5 criminal proceedings against Ecodefense. These charges could result in a prison sentence of up to two years for Alexandra Koroleva, the organisation's managing director.

Further information:

Declaration of Solidarity & List of Signatory NGOs: <https://t1p.de/jl7d>

Contacts:

Vladimir Slivyak, Campaigner Ecodefense: +7 903 299 758 4, ecodefense@protonmail.com

Kerstin Rudek, BI Lüchow-Dannenberg: +49 159 021 548 31,

kerstin.rudek@bi-luechow-dannenberg.de

Moritz Schröder-Therre, Press Officer urgewald: +49 176 640 799 65, moritz@urgewald.org